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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

50X1-HUM

COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

SUBJECT Description of Conditions at the "Anton" Coal Mine
Near BrnoDATE DISTR. 15 Dec 1952
50X1-HUM

NO. OF PAGES 2

NO. OF ENCLS.

SUPP. TO
REPORT NO.50X1-HUM
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- The "Anton" coal mine is located adjacent to the Zbysov concentration camp, which is one of many such installations in the Rissik Oslawau coal fields. In fact, each mine in the area has its own concentration camp to provide mine workers. Zbysov is located about 20 km west of Brno at 49°09'N, 34°02'W. There were 300 prisoners at Zbysov, working three shifts of 100 each. Meanwhile at nearby Oslavany (49°7½'N, 33°59½'W) there were 200 prisoners and at Zastavka (exact location not determined) there were 120 prisoners. There was also a camp-and-mine installation at Rosice (49°20'N, 34°03'W). There was considerable secrecy involved in regard to other camps. The camp doctor was also a prisoner and was serving a life sentence. But as he was the only doctor in the four camps he was allowed to make calls at the other three.

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- Production figures were also considered secret, but each man had a minimum daily production quota of 4.5 metric tons of raw coal. Pneumatic drills were used and the coal was loaded into small coal cars about 4'x3'x2' holding eight hundred kilograms each. Sometimes a man could get by with filling five of these cars or only four metric tons. The three shifts worked seven days a week and no holidays were observed. On that basis, at a theoretical rate of 4.5 metric tons per day per man, the mine would produce 1,350 metric tons of raw coal per day. Presumably the other mines were worked on about the same basis. Four and five-tenths metric tons is a good average per man because although some of the workers produce less because of absenteeism or death (it may take a few days to get replacements) and some fill the cars with rocks to meet the quotas, there are still those who go over their quota to gain special canteen or letter-writing privileges.
- each mine has its own coal cleaning plant. The one at Zbysov was located about one mile from the mine entrance. The loaded 800 kg coal cars from the

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mine lift were raised by two hooks onto an elevated conveyor cable which carried the loaded cars to the washery, where they were emptied and returned to the mine on the same cable. [redacted] the cleaning plant [redacted] could be seen from the camp. This plant also operated 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It was on a railroad spur and gondola cars could be seen loading there three or four times a day. [redacted] there never seemed to be a backlog of coal so [redacted] the capacity was better than 60 metric tons an hour of raw coal. 50X1-HUM

4. The coal from the "Anton" mine was said to be quite old, geologically speaking. It was very soft, and when taken in large chunks these chunks could be crushed in the palm of one's hand. When crushed the coal turned into very fine particles which contained "crystal salts" /sic/. [redacted] the coal [redacted] was to be used for "chemical purposes". [redacted] it was used in the manufacture of medicines. 50X1-HUM

5. The mine itself centered on one vertical shaft which had been made progressively deeper as each level was used up. At the time [redacted] were still working the twelfth level, although they were getting ready to open up the thirteenth and exploitation of the fourteenth and fifteenth was being planned. The twelfth level was at an approximate depth of 1200 feet. It was reached by a lift which made the descent in about 50 seconds. This was far too fast. After arriving at the twelfth level one could not see clearly, one's heart would beat fiercely, and one could not hear normally for over an hour. The lift itself had three connected sections, one on top of another, and each section carried ten men. The top of the shaft was connected to the concentration camp by a 15 meter passage covered with barbed wire, through which the workers marched to and from the mine. 50X1-HUM

6. The daily work quota may seem rather small, but due to the inefficient operation and poor working conditions it is not exactly easy to fill. In the first place, almost four hours of the eight hour shift are taken up in getting to and from the place where the coal is actually worked. There are seven or eight miles of tunnel on the twelfth level alone. It usually takes two hours to walk to work. The coal is loaded on the 800 kg cars and pulled along the various tracks by some of the 20 small horses which are kept in the mines for this purpose. There are also a few Diesel engines used to pull the cars, but horses are used more extensively. All of these horses are blind, incidentally.

7. Ineffective timbers caused several fatal accidents in the mine. These timbers were constructed by the prisoners [redacted] worked eight hours in the mine and eight hours in the camp and had eight hours for sleep. The time in the camp was devoted to cutting the timbers. Many men were also killed by the mine gases, as ventilation gets poorer the further away one is from the shaft. The diet includes no fruits or vegetables and nearly everyone gets scurvy. The prisoners all pray before going into the mine. Some have committed suicide by jumping into the mineshaft. In some instances, when a man is obviously too weak to work he is removed from the camp so that a stronger man can fill his place. [redacted] the sick men were sent to work on farms, but there was no way to tell what actually happened to them. 50X1-HUM

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